POL 27 - ARAB-ISR

OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

210139

INDICATE: ☐ COLLECT
☐ CHARGE TO

CONFIDENTIAL
Classification

XR DEF 12 GS

FOR OC/T USE ONLY

Origin

Info

ACTION: AmEmbassy TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

STATE 210139

LIMDIS

JUN 10 7 25 PM '67

Following note was handed this afternoon to Ambassador Harmon by Under Secretary Rostow: QTE The Secretary of State ~~XXXXXX~~, presents his compliments to His Excellency the Ambassador of Israel and has the honor to refer to the Ambassador's Note of June 10, 1967, concerning the attack by Israeli ~~XXXX~~ aircraft and torpedo boats on the United-States naval vessel U.S.S. Liberty, which was carried out at 1605 and ~~XX~~ 1625 hours local time, respectively, on June 8, 1967, while the U.S.S. Liberty was engaged in peaceful activities in international waters.

At the time of the attack, the U.S.S. Liberty was flying the~~XXX~~ American flag and its identification was clearly indicated in large white letters and numerals on its hull. It was broad daylight and the weather conditions were excellent. Experience demonstrates that both the flag and the identification number of the vessel were readily visible from the air. At 1450 hours local time on June 8, 1967, two Israeli aircraft circled the

210 139

EXTRACTED BY DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/IRR/DC
REVIEWED BY [signature] DATE 9/22/82
DECLASSIFIED/RELEASED ☐ EXEMPTIONS EXISTING MARKINGS ☐ REASON(S) ☐ DECLASSIFIED/RELEASED ☐ RELEASE DENIED ☐
RDC for XDS EXT. DATE
E.O. AUTH.

Drafted by: Text approved in White House Clearances:

Tel. Ext.

Telegraphic transmission and classification approved by: S/S - Mr. Walsh

CONFIDENTIAL
Classification

FORM DS-322 8-65

U.S.S. Liberty three times, with the evident purpose of identifying the vessel. Accordingly there is every reason to believe that the U.S.S. Liberty was identified, or at least her nationality determined, by Israeli aircraft approximately one hour before the attack. In these circumstances, the later military attack by Israeli aircraft on the U.S.S. Liberty is quite literally incomprehensible. As a minimum, the attack must be condemned as an act of military recklessness reflecting wanton disregard for human life.

The subsequent attack by Israeli torpedo boats, substantially after the vessel was or should have been identified by Israeli military forces, manifests the same reckless disregard for human life. The silhouette and conduct of the U.S.S. Liberty readily distinguished it XXX from any vessel that could have been XXXXX considered as hostile. The U.S.S. Liberty was peacefully engaged, posed no threat XXXXXX whatsoever to the torpedo boats, and obviously carried no armament affording it a combat capability. It could and should have been scrutinized visually at close range before torpedoes were fired.

While the Ambassador of Israel has informed the Secretary of State that "the Government of Israel is prepared to make amends for the tragic loss of life and material damage," the Secretary of State wishes to make clear that the United States Government expects the

DECLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL
Classification

Government of Israel also to take the disciplinary XXXXX measures which international law requires in the event of wrongful conduct by the military personnel of a State. He wishes also to make clear that the United States Government expects the Government of Israel to issue instructions necessary to ensure that United States personnel and property will not again be endangered by the wrongful actions of XXXX Israeli military personnel.

The United States Government expects that the Government of Israel will provide compensation in accordance with international law to the extent that it is possible to compensate for the losses sustained in this tragic event. The DepartmentXXXXXX of State will, in the near future, present to the Government of Israel a full monetary statement of its claim. END QTE.

END

RUSK

DECLASSIFIED